

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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United States, Europe Seek Agenda for Engagement

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — When the United States joins forces with Europe on the challenges of the global agenda, both become “vastly stronger” in legitimacy, resources and ideas, says Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon.

“On every issue of global importance, Europe’s contributions are crucial to solving major international challenges,” Gordon said at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies October 18 in Washington. Gordon is the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs.

The United States is attending three major summits with European partners and allies less than three weeks apart: the NATO and U.S.-European Union summits in Lisbon November 19-20 and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Summit December 1-2 in Astana, Kazakhstan. Gordon said these three institutions are the “pillars of peace and prosperity in Europe and Eurasia.”

“When the Obama administration came into office, we made re-engaging with our European allies one of our top priorities,” Gordon said. “President Obama did so because he recognized that we faced such a daunting international agenda that we could not possibly deal with it alone.”

An opinion recently expressed by some European observers is that the administration has been focused on foreign policy challenges elsewhere in the world and that Europe has receded from its list of priorities. But Gordon said there is one constant and that is that U.S.-European cooperation has been essential to achieving strategic objectives.

“We recognized that in meeting these challenges, there could be no better partner than Europe, where we work with democratic, prosperous, militarily capable allies who share our values and share our interests,” Gordon said.

In every international challenge from Afghanistan to the Iranian nuclear standoff to global economic troubles, Europe is indispensable, Gordon said. And the United States is still working with European allies to extend stability, security, prosperity and democracy to the entire continent.

Gordon said the United States in the last two years has sought to set relations with Russia on a more constructive and cooperative course. The United States will cooperate with Russian leaders where there are common interests,

but not at the expense of U.S. principles or friends, he added.

NATO, which is the oldest of the three institutions, is the essential mechanism for U.S. security engagement in Europe and for U.S.-European security cooperation outside of the trans-Atlantic alliance, Gordon said. With the addition of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union has become a global factor and a critical partner.

“The treaty marked a milestone for Europe and its role in the world,” Gordon said.

Gordon said the OSCE, which is holding its first summit since 1999, has matured from its Cold War roots to become a global forum to prevent crises, promote human rights and enhance good governance.

U.S. Officials Investigating China’s Green Technologies Trade

Washington — U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk announced October 15 that the United States has initiated an investigation of China’s practices affecting trade and investment in green technologies.

The investigation was initiated in response to a petition filed by the United Steelworkers (USW) union on September 9 under Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act. The petition alleges that China employs a wide range of policies that unfairly support its domestic producers of wind and solar energy products, advanced batteries and energy-efficient vehicles, among other products. China’s actions are inconsistent with its obligations as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), according to the petition.

Section 301 directs the president to identify countries that are engaging in unfair trade practices, and to take trade actions against those countries to remedy the problem, including sanctions if necessary. The administration can initiate a Section 301 case itself, and it can accept outside petitions. The administration can take action under Section 301 if a country is denying the United States its rights under a trade agreement or engaging in unjustifiable, unreasonable or discriminatory acts, policies or practices that burden or restrict U.S. commerce. An act can be found unreasonable even if it does not violate the specific rules of a trade agreement, as long as it is “unfair and inequitable.”

According to the petition, these policies include export restraints, prohibited subsidies, technology-transfer requirements and discrimination against foreign companies and imported goods causing serious prejudice to U.S. interests. The petition further alleges that China’s

policies have caused the annual U.S. trade deficit in green-technology goods with China to increase substantially since China joined the WTO in December 2001.

"We take the USW's claims very seriously, and we are vigorously investigating them," Kirk said. "For those allegations that are supported by sufficient evidence and that can effectively be addressed through WTO dispute settlement, we will vigorously pursue the enforcement of our rights through WTO litigation."

In light of the number and diversity of the acts, policies and practices covered by the petition, and after consulting with the union, the U.S. Trade Representative decided to delay for up to 90 days the request for consultations with the government of China for the purpose of verifying and improving the petition.

Because the issues covered in the investigation involve U.S. rights under the WTO agreement, any U.S. request to China for consultations will be made under the WTO Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes. If consultations fail to result in a mutually acceptable resolution, the U.S. Trade Representative will request the establishment of a WTO panel to resolve the dispute.

Pakistan Floods to Factor Highly in Strategic Dialogue with U.S.

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Senior U.S. and Pakistani officials are preparing for the third round of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue in Washington October 20–22, and the talks, which cover a wide variety of topics ranging from health and energy to defense cooperation, are expected to include a special focus on Pakistan's flooding disaster, according to a State Department official.

The U.S. delegation, led by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and the Pakistani delegation, led by Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, previously met in Islamabad in July and in Washington in March. During their upcoming talks, "one of the primary areas of discussion will be on the response to the floods that just occurred," said Frank Ruggiero, deputy director in the Office of the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Flooding that began in late July has caused what U.S. officials say is the largest humanitarian crisis the international community has ever confronted, with 21 million people affected and one-fifth of Pakistan under

water at one point. So far, the Obama administration has provided \$390 million in immediate relief and recovery efforts for Pakistan, as well as in-kind and technical assistance, such as the use of 26 U.S. helicopters, Ruggiero told reporters at the State Department October 19.

Those helicopters have rescued more than 23,000 people and delivered more than 16 million pounds (7.26 million kilos) of refugee supplies.

"We continue to work very closely with the government of Pakistan, its civil and military leadership, on responding to the floods. And this is really just another example, our reaction and response to the floods, of the strategic nature of the relationship with Pakistan," he said.

The United States views the strategic dialogue as "a mechanism to strengthen the bilateral relationship," Ruggiero said. The talks focus on "shared values, common objectives and mutual respect and trust between the two countries."

During the three days of discussions, 13 working groups will discuss cooperation in areas including water management, health, agriculture, education, economics and finance, energy, science and technology, communications, women's issues, law enforcement and defense.

At the conclusion of the strategic dialogue discussions in July, Clinton announced more than \$500 million in U.S. assistance projects for Pakistan, including funds for improving health and medical facilities, water management and distribution, farm productivity and agricultural marketing opportunities, energy and gender equality.

Ruggiero said that during the upcoming round of the dialogue, "we'll be looking at the implementation of those pledges that the secretary made in July."

However, he acknowledged that "some of the projects that were announced or were being worked on were wiped away by the floods," which killed 1,800 people and destroyed more than a quarter of Pakistan's cropland. The flooding has affected more people than the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the 2005 Pakistan earthquake and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami combined, Clinton has said.

Relations between Pakistan and the United States are "coming through a period of tension," Ruggiero said, and the dialogue "provides a venue to really exchange views with the Pakistanis on a strategic level and to move beyond these tensions in the relationship."

Both Clinton and Qureshi are “personally invested” in the talks and the goal of redefining the relationship “into a mature, sustained, long-term economic and political partnership,” Ruggiero said.

The Obama administration is also supporting Pakistan’s efforts to “strengthen democratic institutions, foster economic development, expand opportunity and defeat extremist groups who threaten both nations’ common security,” he said.

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